

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 NSC-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07
NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 DHA-02 EB-08
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R 031731Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY LIMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5984
INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY QUITO
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

C O N F I D E N T I A L LIMA 6487

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PE, VE
SUBJECT: POLITICAL REACTION TO PRESIDENT'S INDEPENDENCE DAY ADDRESS

REF: LIMA 6387 (NOTALL)

SUMMARY:. REACTION TO PRESIDENT MORALES BERMUDEZ' JULY 28 SPEECH HAS FOCUSED, PREDICTABLY, ON THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT'S PLAN FOR A RETURN TO ELECTED CONSTITUTIONAL RULE AND ON THE GENERALLY CONCILIATORY ATTITUDE TAKEN TOWARD THE ROLE OF POLITICAL PARTIES. PARTY REACTION IS MIXED BUT GENERALLY FAVORABLE, ESPECIALLY IN APRA CIRCLES. END SUMMARY.

1. GOVERNMENT-OWNED OR CONTROLLED PRESS CARRIED EXTENSIVE ANALYSIS AND COMMENTARY ON THE PRESIDENT'S ANNOUNCEMENT OF A CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY IN THE SECOND HALF OF 1978 AND FOR ELECTIONS IN 1980. GOP-OWNED LA CRONICA CALLS THE SPEECH ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT POLITICAL DOCUMENTS IN RECENT YEARS IN THAT IT PROPOSES THE CONSOLIDATION OF REVOLUTIONARY ACHIEVEMENTS IN AN INSTITUTIONALIZED DEMOCRACY. SEVERAL OTHER COMMENTARIES EMPHASIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF INCLUDING
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"POPULAR ORGANIZATIONS" IN THE PROPOSED CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY. ACCORDING TO THESE COMMENTARIES, GROUPS SUCH AS THE PEASANT' CONFEDERATION AND THE INDUSTRIAL COMMUNITIES, BORN OF THE REVOLUTION, MUST PLAY A DECISIVE ROLE IN THE DELIBERATIONS LEADING TO A NEW CONSTITUTION.

2. MORALES BERMUDEZ' AFFIRMATION THAT THE TRADITIONAL

POLITICAL PARTIES ARE NECESSARY AND HAVE AN IMPORTANT PART TO PLAY IN THE RETURN TO CONSTITUTIONAL RULE HAS ALSO BEEN WIDELY COMMENTED UPON. THE PARTIES, ESPECIALLY APRA, INTERPRET THE PRESIDENT'S REMARKS AS A REVINDICATION, ESPECIALLY IN VIEW OF THE LOW ESTEEM IN WHICH TRADITIONAL PARTIES WERE HELD DURING THE SO-CALLED FIRST PHASE OF THE REVOLUTION. LA CRONICA WARNS, HOWEVER, THAT THE PARTIES MUST REORIENT THEMSELVES TOWARD THE NEW NATIONAL REALITY, AND THAT THE PRESIDENT'S REMARKS SHOULD NOT GIVE RISE TO FALSE OR PREMATURE PRESUMPTIONS OF VICTORY ON THE PART OF CIVILIAN GROUPS.

3. THE SPEECH HAS NOT GENERATED MUCH ENTHUSIASM AMONG RANK AND FILE CIVILIANS, PROBABLY DUE TO ITS ERUDITE, LOFTY TONE AND THE FACT THAT MORALES BERMUDEZ RESISTED THE TEMPTATION TO PROMISE IMMEDIATE RELIEF FROM CURRENT ECONOMIC HARDSHIPS. IN PARTY CIRCLES REACTION IS MIXED. THOSE WHO WANTED ELECTIONS IMMEDIATELY--FORMER PRESIDENT BELAUNDE'S ACCION POPULAR--ARE PROBABLY DISAPPOINTED, WHILE THE COMMUNISTS, WHO HOPED FOR A LONGER DELAY IN ORDER TO EXPAND POPULAR SUPPORT, ARE PROBABLY UNHAPPY. APRA CO-SECRETARY CARLOS ROCA CACERES TOLD EMBOFF THAT PARTY IS PLEASED BUT NOT JUBILANT. AS THE LARGEST, BEST ORGANIZED PARTY IN PERU, APRA IS VERY OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE POSSIBILITIES FOR PLAYING A DECISIVE ROLE IN THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY IN DETERMINING THE COURSE OF PERU'S POLITICAL

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FUTURE. AT THE SAME TIME, APRA IS IN NO HURRY TO ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY FOR A BANKRUPT ECONOMY, AND VIEWS THE 1980 TIMETABLE AS FAVORABLE TO ITS INTERESTS. ACCORDING TO ROCA, APRA LEADERSHIP IS PLEASED THAT THE SPEECH WAS VAGUE IN TERMS OF ELECTORAL MECHANISMS AND A SPECIFIC CALENDAR FOR THE FORMATION OF THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY. APRA VIEWS THIS VAGUENESS AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE SUGGESTIONS AND INFLUENCE THE COURSE OF EVENTS. (ACCORDING TO DECLARATIONS OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE JOINT COMMAND, GENERAL OSCAR MOLINA, SPECIFICS ON THE ASSEMBLY COULD BE ANNOUNCED TOGETHER WITH THE FINAL VERSION OF THE GOP'S PLAN TUPAC AMARU ON THE OCTOBER 3 ANNIVERSARY OF THE REVOLUTION.) APRA IS DISAPPOINTED THAT THE IDEA OF MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS MAY HAVE BEEN ABANDONED (IT WAS NOT MENTIONED IN SPEECH) AND ATTRIBUTES THIS TO THE GOP'S FEAR OF A RESOUNDING POPULAR REJECTION IN THE FACE OF EXTREME HARD TIMES. APRA SOURCE SAYS THAT PARTY, IN READING BETWEEN THE LINES OF THE PRESIDENT'S SPEECH, FEELS THAT MUCH OF IT IS DIRECTED AT APRA; ON THE EVE OF THE ADDRESS, FOR INSTANCE, APRA RECEIVED WORD DIRECTLY FROM THE PALACE THAT THE PRESIDENT WOULD ANNOUNCE A CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY FOR 1978 AND ELECTION FOR 1980. HE ADDED THAT MILITARY GOVERNMENT IS GRATEFUL FOR THE APRA LABOR CONFEDERATION'S

REFUSAL TO ENDORSE OR ACTIVELY SUPPORT THE COMMUNIST-DIRECTED
GENERAL STRIKE OF JULY 19.

4. ROCA REVEALED THAT APRA LEADERSHIP, WHICH MET IN LIMA
OVER THE LONG INDEPENDENCE DAY WEEKEND, IS PREPARING A
RESPONSE TO THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS, AND THAT CO-SECRETARY
ANDRES TOWNSEND EZCURRA WILL BE THE PRINCIPAL DRAFTER OF THE
REPLY. HE ADDED THAT APRA HAS A DRAFT CONSTITUTION READY
WHICH, WITH SOME UPDATING, WILL BE SUBMITTED TO THE
CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY. HE ALSO TOLD EMBOFF IN STRICTEST
CONFIDENCE THAT A PRIVATE MEETING BETWEEN PRESIDENT MORALES
BERMUDEZ AND APRA CHIEF HAYA DE LA TORRE IS LIKELY TO TAKE
PLACE BEFORE HAYA'S MID-AUGUST DEPARTURE FOR CARACAS AN THE
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Message Attributes

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